

DELAWARE BAY BEACH WORK GROUP

March 21, 2014

SENATE HEARING ROOM, DOVER

10:00 – 12 Noon

AGENDA

Comments from the Chair

Drainage Update

Final Report on the Economic Study

Status of Bay Beach Projects

Revenue Outlook

Final Comments from the Chair

Welcome – Senator Simpson

Thanks to everyone for coming today.

Committee Members in Attendance – Senator Gary Simpson, Tony Pratt, Frank Piorko, Kelvin Ramsey, Representative Harvey Kenton, David Wunsch, Michael Petit de Mange, Al Rizzo, Gene Donaldson, Ralph Reeb and Hal Godwin.

All beach communities represented except for Big Stone Beach.

Dave Small – Deputy Secretary of DNREC

Secretary O'Mara was not able to join us today but he certainly appreciates the participation of not only the committee members but all of you from the communities that have been a part of these discussions. This is the last meeting for this phase of the issues we have been wrestling with and you will hear more about that in the presentations today. This issue is not going to stop with today's meeting. And I think some of the future discussions we are going to need to have with probably some combination of people in this room and possibly others, is the future funding situation for not only our bay beaches and how to manage them to deal with resiliency in all the other issues that face these area, these unique and special areas but also our ocean beaches. We had a formula that has worked fairly successful but we are getting into some times where sustainability is questionable as far as funding goes and how we manage these beaches and what are those revenue sources going to look like. We have talked before about cost sharing some of this work up and down the coast and what that might look like as an idea and are there other ideas. We may be ending one part of the conversation but I think we are going to be starting another part of the conversation at some point in the near future and we look forward to working

with all of you. But again on behalf of the Secretary, our staff and team and myself we thank you for all of your thoughtful input in this. And looking forward to some reaction.

Senator Simpson

As Dave noted this is probably the last meeting of this work group. This was not a legislative work group that was established, this was established by Secretary O'Mara and we are at his beck and call, if you will, as to our livability beyond this particular group. But as the Deputy Secretary said the real big issue now that we've all come to realize is the funding issue for moving forward on beach preservation for your communities. That will be the next phase from the Secretary. Some of us may be on that work group as well.

Frank Piorko - Drainage Sub-committee – Drainage Update

Most of you are aware the conversation about coastal vulnerability and the protection of our coastal areas kind of beget secondary conversation of flooding and minor flooding in drainage along with the larger issues of the coast flooding. We were grateful to have gotten some funding through the General Assembly to begin having a look at the bay beach communities in terms of some of the more, we will characterize them as the public works types of drainage improvements, that might be able to be accomplished through the traditional view of these types of public works projects, whether it be culvert elevations or drainage improvements that can be made. We have engaged with URS Consultants to assist us with that. Brooks Cahall and Stephen Wright have been shepherding that project. Brooks can give you an update with where we are with that study. People don't like the term "study" for study sake. We don't spend money for studying problems unless we hope to fix them. We have a good track record of identifying problem areas that can be improved and when funding is made available moving into the project portion of that phase. That is our goal with this project as well. We have reached out to the communities, gotten ideas, went and looked in the communities and entered into an engineering assessment phase with the idea of actually doing projects that can accomplish some goals.

Brooks Cahall – Drainage Update

URS is a consulting firm under contract. And so far we have held meetings with each of the communities. Those meetings were well attended. We identified study areas and everyone was sent a survey. If you have not received a survey you can get up with me or Stephen Wright and we will get you a copy. We have received hundreds of these back from the communities and between that information and the information that we gathered from the community meetings URS is now sensitizing that data to identify problem areas that they may need to look at in the field. They have 5-7 days of field work scheduled and they are going to try to be out there next week, but that has been pushed back to early April because of the snow days. Some of the communities have asked us to let them know and as soon we have hard dates Stephen will be sending out information. Once that engineering review is done and that is actually the engineers in the field looking at the problems trying to figure out the causes and what the solutions might look like. Then they will take those and develop those, rank them down and the top 10 they will put together conceptual designs. Not construction designs but conceptual designs, that look at here is what we can do to solve this problem, here is what it looks like; these are the issues you have to face as far as permits and costs and land rights. The ranking of the communities will be based on the priority matrix that the Drainage Work Group put together. Based on that, they are

going to rank all the problem areas in all of the communities so that in a fair way we are not putting one community against the other. So we will have 10 conceptual designs throughout all the communities and at that point that is where this first study stops. We have requested to have a construction plan design done and the eventually implementation but at this time that is not funded. <http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/swc/shoreline/pages/delawarebaybeachworkgroup.aspx>

Frank Piorko

We anticipate that the end product will involve some conversation that we will need to have with not only the municipalities but perhaps the counties, and our colleagues at DELDot since this is all related. We will hear a lot about culverts, drainage, road elevations and we may even be working with some of our mosquito control ditches as we have in the past with some communities. Those are permitting challenges as well as operational challenges. We have a lot of work ahead of us but we are up to the challenges. By way of the information that we have from all the contacts here we will keep folks apprised of the progress we are making using the list that was generated.

Senator Simpson

Is it a possibility with some of this drainage work could it be fashioned along with tax ditch type concept?

Brooks Cahall

Yes, Kitts Hummock as petitioned for a tax ditch, we are working on a preliminary report. We put that on hold until we hear the results back for URS so we don't duplicate work. Once we receive that information we are going to roll whatever is in Kitts Hummock into the preliminary report to see where that goes. There are some landowner issues that right now it would not go forward. We are hoping to go back to the landowner with some ideas for projects that they may find more acceptable.

Jim Eisenhardt – Presentation - Final Report on the Economic Study

<http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/swc/shoreline/pages/delawarebaybeachworkgroup.aspx>

Tony Pratt – Status of Bay Beach Projects

<http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/swc/shoreline/pages/delawarebaybeachworkgroup.aspx>

Al Rizzo - Prime Hook Refuge

We were able to get an interagency agreement signed by the Army Corps and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to begin planning work to design the actual footprint for dune and beach restoration as well as the first phase of the marsh platform. We have run into a couple of snags in term of alignment of the dune but hope to be able to work around that situation and I will be meeting with the Army Corps Thursday, March 27 to begin those discussions. In the permitting process with the Corps about how we are going to handle the supplemental and environmental bid pack statement. There has been positive response from colleague. Atkins Global will begin the actual marsh restoration design. We are in the design phase of both phases of the process for beach and dune complex as well as the channel configuration and marsh restoration. The projections to begin work were late fall early winter but cannot say that will happen. Sand is a premium and finding enough of it is a challenge. I applaud Tony Pratt's efforts to bring us

together as far as the State and Federal partnership to minimize and reduce mobilization cost. It cost between 1,000,000 to 1,500,000 to get a dredge on site. Thanks to Congress they were generous.

Senator Simpson

Funding has been discussed to possibility taxing rentals along with hotel rooms, private rental are currently untaxed. That did not come up in discussion with the Governor and it was too late to do anything meaningful regarding that issue. This may be a good starting point with the next work study group.

Thanks to those that have served on the committee. Thank the communities that have been here at every meeting and I appreciate that very much.

Tony Pratt

As Senator Simpson stated this work group was charged by Secretary O'Mara but actually the idea came from Senator Simpson and Senator Bushweller, that there would be a better format and discussion and sharing a vision and formulation of plan by having a workforce. Senator Bushweller was hoping to make it to this meeting today but he had a conflict. He stepped down from his co-chair position when he was redistricted and no longer a representative of the bay front communities. I would like to thank both Senator Simpson and Senator Bushweller for the leadership, your vision, for your dedication of effort and time on this. You and I have talked a lot off line about this issue and it is heartfelt from you and I think that it is your leadership and Senator Bushweller's leadership and the leadership at this table as well, that has moved this issue forward into a more modern approach to what we have. We have formidable challenges in front of us but I think the core of the people that are here will be instrumental in your leadership moving us even further down the road. So, thank you for all that you have done.

Meeting Adjourned

